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ORGANIZATION (if any): John Handler, Village Historian

1. NAME OF DISTRICT: United States Merchant Marine Academy Campus
2. COUNTY: Nassau TOWN/CITY: N. Hempstead VILLAGE: King's Point

3. DESCRIPTION: The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy campus, at the base of Steamboat Road, occupies most of Elm Point, the most important prominence on the west side of the Great Neck peninsular overlooking Little Neck Bay. The campus can be divided into four parts. The center is dominated by a 1940's Beaux Arts layout of tawny limestone buildings in the style of stripped classicism. These are grouped in an interlocking sequence around the imposing white French Renaissance centerpiece of the campus and administrative headquarters, Wiley Hall. South of this formal grouping is an irregular group of private homes used as offices and residences. This section of the campus encloses part of Grenwolde Circle, an early 20th century Tudor and English Cottage style real estate development. North-east of the main campus are 25 acres of playing fields, and immediately north of the formal main campus is the grounds of the Museum of the American Merchant Marine.

4. SIGNIFICANCE: The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy campus is a pearl of multi-building Beaux Arts design dating from the first half of the 20th century, in this case an academic layout. It was designed by Alfred Hopkins (1870-1941) and Associates in 1942-3. The campus contains two of the most important surviving Gold Coast estates in Kings Point; Wiley Hall, formerly the Henri Bendel and Walter Chrysler estates designed by Henry Otis Chapman (Sr.) (1862-1929) in 1916, and the Museum of the American Merchant Marine, formerly the William S. Barstow estate designed by Greville Rickard (1890-1956) in 1930. The campus also preserves as offices and residences the former Thomas Meighan home, the Nicholas Schenck house, and five of the more notable Grenwolde Circle houses. The campus is thus a model of adaptive reuse of estate buildings by an academic institution. Thousands of cadets have trained here for the U.S. merchant marine under the aegis of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

5. MAP:

NYS DOT:
Flushing
Quad.



6. SOURCES:

Mitchell, C. Bradford. We'll Deliver: Early History of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, 1938-1956. King's Point: U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, 1977.

7. THREATS TO AREA:

BY ZONING ☐

BY ROADS ☐

BY DEVELOPERS ☐

BY DETERIORATION ☐

OTHER _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

9 PHOTOS:

See continuation sheets.

The Campus (www.usmma.edu/academy-life)

The Academy campus and facilities comfortably accommodate the Regiment of Midshipmen. The design of the buildings is simple yet functional, and the campus has been laid out to take full advantage of the picturesque waterfront of Long Island's north shore. The Academy's buildings and walkways are named after individuals whose deeds have brought fame to America's merchant marine.

USMMA Campus is located at Kings Point, NY. On the slope looking toward Long Island Sound stands a monument to the Academy's World War II casualties. Around this monument are grouped an outdoor swimming pool; a boat basin and the Yocum Waterfront Center; Gibbs Hall, with modern science and engineering laboratories; and Samuels Hall, with Humanities department classrooms, the Continuing Education Office, the Computer Resources Office, a ship's bridge simulator, and laboratories for teaching nautical science. A beautiful interfaith chapel, which serves the religious needs of the regiment, stands on a grassy knoll to the south of the War Memorial.

Across the Campus

Wiley Hall, facing Long Island Sound, is the chief administration center of the Academy. Formerly the home of automobile magnate Walter P. Chrysler, this historic building contains the offices of the superintendent, senior members of his staff, and the Admissions Office.

East of Wiley Hall lies the center of the Academy campus, marked by a striking, 172- foot flagpole. Surrounding this landmark are Fulton Hall, the marine engineering and science building; Bowditch Hall, housing the Department of Marine Transportation and the 900-seat Ackerman Auditorium; and the Schuyler Otis Bland Memorial Library.

Delano Hall, the midshipman dining room, and five dormitory buildings - Barry, Rogers, Cleveland, Murphy, and Palmer Halls - complete the circle of buildings enclosing the main campus. The dormitories and dining room are connected by an underground promenade, which contains the midshipman lounge and canteen, uniform shop, post office, laundry facilities, bank, barber shop, and ship's service store.

Athletics and Activities

On the perimeter of the Academy are athletic fields for football, baseball, lacrosse and soccer, as well as tennis and handball courts and a quarter-mile surfaced track; Furuseth Hall, containing the Department of Naval Science, the Department of Shipboard Training, and the Administrative Services Department; Vickery Gate, home of the Department of Public Safety and Security; O'Hara Hall, which has a spacious gymnasium, an indoor olympic-size swimming pool, and athletic facilities; Patten health clinic; and Land Hall, the Midshipmen Activities Center.

Although the majority of Academy buildings were constructed during World War II, ongoing modernization programs have rendered the classroom, laboratory and dormitory facilities virtually brand new.

On the northern border of the Academy lies the McNulty Campus, named after the "father" of the Academy, Rear Admiral Richard R. McNulty, who was instrumental in calling public attention to the need for a federal maritime officer training school. Located in this area is the American Merchant Marine Museum, a popular stop for campus visitors.

Melville Hall, named after [Herman Melville](#), the author of *Moby Dick* and a Long Island resident, is also known as the Officers' Club or O Club. Melville Hall is part of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, a Federal Service Academy located in Kings Point, New York.

Melville Hall was built around 1912 as a summer residence for the silent movie actor [Thomas Meighan](#). In 1916, Meighan appeared as the star of [Peck's Bad Boys](#), a satire of President Wilson's administration.

Along with Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks Sr., Meighan was well known in the industry. Hollywood at that time was centered in New York so many theatrical stars such as Groucho Marks, Fannie Bryce, Charlie Chaplin and literary authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, lived in the surrounding areas. Mr. Meighan, upon the inception of "talking" movies, in 1928 moved to the Broadway "legitimate" stage. From this beginning Melville Hall was destined to be a showplace for hospitality and entertainment.

The first mayor of the village of Kings Point, where Melville Hall is located, was Henry Barstow whose home is now the American Merchant Marine Museum. In January, 1942, the Academy site was purchased by the U.S. Government; in the ensuing years Melville Hall was used as the Administration building and Publication Center for the Academy. Later the Chrysler Mansion, now Wiley Hall, became the Administration building. This building was the former residence of the industrialist Walter P. Chrysler.

The conversion of Melville Hall into an Officers' Club did not begin until the 1950's when the renovation of the existing bedrooms on the second deck occurred. Lodging then became available for visitors to the Academy on a short-term basis. There are presently six rooms, all with private bathroom facilities at the club.

The Dining Room overlooking Long Island Sound was completely funded by the USMMA Alumni Association and the Kings Point Fund in 1976. It was not until the mid 1980's that a full kitchen and in-house catering service for food and beverage was established. Further renovations in the 1990's up scaled the Dining Room and front entrance as well as the guest facilities.

Today Melville Hall hosts many catered functions for the Academy, Alumni, Active Military and community organizations. Eligibility for the use of Melville Hall is limited. Guests are invited to join the faculty and staff on Wednesdays for a delicious buffet lunch at 11:30 (see [Weekly Buffet Menu](#)). A social hour is planned each day, weekends excluded at 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM. The bar is located past the living room on the main floor. Enjoy the Academy and Melville Hall



Built in 1910 and enlarged in 1929 it was home to William Slocum Barstow, partner of Thomas A. Edison and inventor of the electric meter. It was sold in 1953 to Fredrick W.I. Lundy of Lundys' Restaurant, Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, NY. A bit of an eccentric, Mr. Lundy never lived in the house and in 1975 it was sold to the USMMA Alumni Association, which in turn gave it to the US Government. It is now home to the American Merchant Marine Museum.



Wiley Hall

This building commemorates Admiral Henry A. Wiley (1867-1943). A graduate of the United States Naval Academy, he enjoyed an illustrious career in the United States Navy, serving in the Spanish-American War and World War I. He retired as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Fleet. In 1936, President Roosevelt appointed him to the United States Maritime Commission. The "father of the United States Merchant Marine Cadet Corps," Admiral Wiley became Commissioner in Charge of Training in 1938. He created the Section of Cadet Training and appointed Captain R. R. McNulty, USNR, as supervisor of the program. When the United States entered World War II in 1941, Admiral Wiley returned to active duty and served in the office of the Secretary of the Navy.

Wiley Hall was built in 1917 for Henri W. Bendel, a well-known Fifth Avenue retailer. Designed by Henry Otis Chapman, it is a fine example of French Beaux Arts architecture. In 1923, the automobile magnate Walter P. Chrysler purchased the house as his summer "cottage." The mansion was situated on twelve acres and boasted 23 rooms and 10 baths. After Chrysler and his wife died, in January 1942 the United States government purchased the estate for \$100,000. Merchant marine officer training assumed federal status at Kings Point.

Wiley Hall was used initially for class and dormitory space. Now, it serves as the main administrative building on the campus.

Wiley Hall, facing Long Island Sound, is the chief administration center of the Academy. Formerly the home of automobile magnate Walter P. Chrysler, this historic building contains the offices of the superintendent, senior members of his staff, and the Admissions Office.



› Mariner's Chapel

About

The United States Merchant Marine Academy is proud to have as its House of Worship the Mariners Chapel. Completed in 1961, the Chapel serves Midshipmen as well as civilians for various religious and social purposes. The Chapel was built to the Glory of God and to commemorate the sacrifices of the officers and men of the U. S. Merchant Marine who gave their lives at sea in World Wars I and II. The Chapel belongs to Merchant Mariners and to all Americans; it stands as one of our country's National Memorials to America's wartime seamen and serves to remind America of the great sacrifices of merchant mariners who go down to the sea in ships, especially in time of war.



Within the Chapel, the Roll of Honor Book is stored. This book, permanently housed in a brass and glass display case mounted on Vermont marble immediately in front of the altar, lists the name, rank or rating, ship and date of sinking of over 7,000 officers and seamen who lost their lives on merchant ships during both World Wars. Recent research has uncovered another 600-plus names which are being recorded in a second volume. Over time this book has become one of the Merchant Marine Academy's most cherished possessions. Daily, a selected

Midshipman on duty is required to report to the chapel and ceremoniously open the case and turn a page. This ceremony is performed so that all mariners in the book will be remembered.

Main Facade

Upon looking at the front of the chapel one will see four towering pillars rising skyward to an inscription over the main entrance: "To the Glory of God and in proud and loving memory of the men of the Merchant Marine who gave their lives for their country." In the bottom left corner is the cornerstone marked 1959 marking the beginning of the building of the chapel. On the roof of the Chapel, one notices the steeple containing a beacon. At night this flashing beacon is visible for miles. This beacon has come to symbolize the light that guides mariners lost at sea back to land or their final destination, and to remind all that they have not been forgotten. Covering the steeple is a golden dome with a weathervane in the form of a full-rigged sailing ship.

Chapel Interior



The Chapel itself is rather simple in its design as both a memorial and an active house of worship. It is comprised of a main chapel and three smaller chapels in the basement for weekday worship. The basement of the chapel also houses a Midshipman lounge as well as the chapel offices. The interior of the main chapel is painted blue to imitate a clear sky and a calm sea. Colonial style pews and stained glass windows behind the altar also adorn the chapel. Perhaps the most impressive thing about the chapel is its towering interfaith altar. This altar, which sits on an automatic turntable, is unmistakable upon entering the chapel. Its three sides correspond to the three predominant faiths in the United States, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. In keeping with the traditions of a maritime chapel, even the candleholders on the altar are in the form of fully rigged sailing ships.

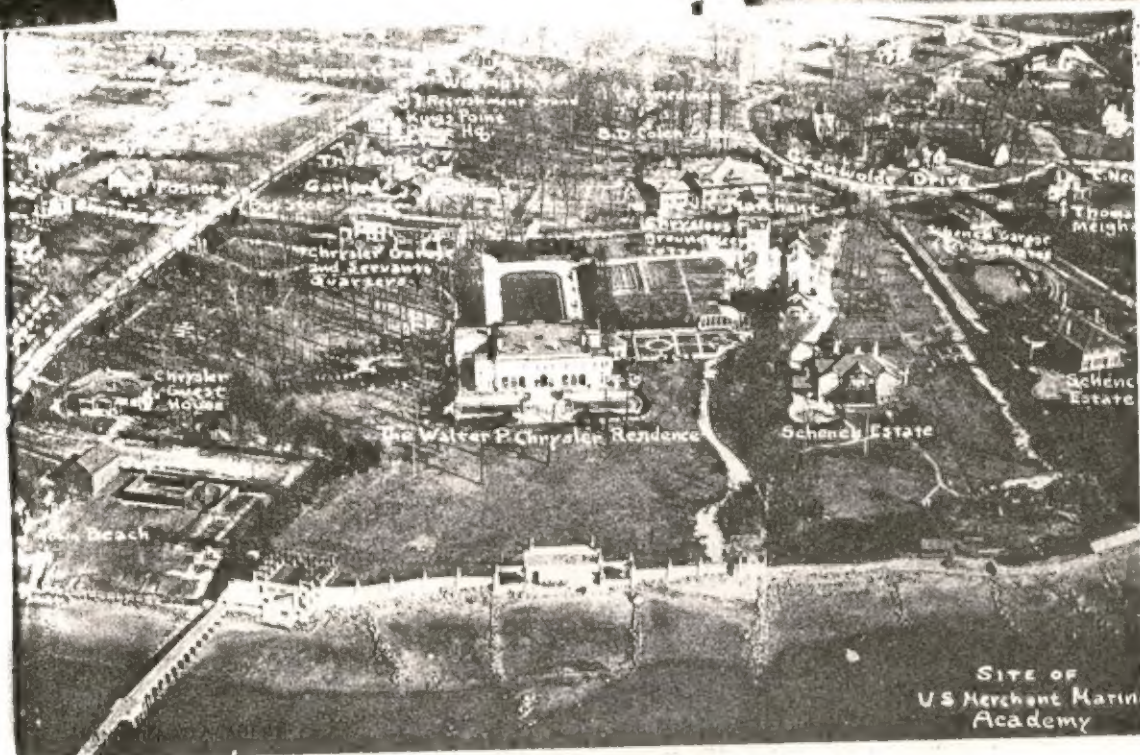
To the left of the altar is an octagonal pulpit donated by the American Seamen's Friend Society. To its right is a lectern given by the National Maritime Board of Great Britain. This lectern's wood comes from the deck of the British Merchant Navy training vessel HMS Conway (1839-1955).

The Peoples' Chapel

Construction of the Chapel began in 1959 and by 1961 it was completed at a cost of \$750,000. The building of the Chapel was overseen by Chaplains Danielsen, Morril, and Sullivan, and Superintendent Vice Admiral Gordon McLintock, USMS. Being completely built through public subscription without government aid has led the chapel to be thought of as belonging to the American people. The famous architectural firm of Eggers & Higgins was responsible for the building's design; other buildings designed by this firm include as the Lincoln Memorial, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and the Seaman's Church Institute in New York City.

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Aerial photograph of the future Kings Point campus about 1930, twelve years before the "first overlay." (For stages of conversion, see following pages)

Courtesy Myron Thomas

boundary of the lately acquired Nicholas Schenck Estate (a line running behind present-day Delano Hall) and the inward-biting curve of Grenwolde Drive. The narrow end of the wedge, as today, ran south from Steamboat Road opposite its junction with Steppingstone Lane. The main gate was not then located at this junction, however, but at that of Third Street, which roughly bisected the wedge, running southerly from a point almost opposite Elmridge Road. Most of Third Street fell casualty to the construction program, but its north end survives today as Marvin Road.

West of Third Street the shore side of the wedge was occupied principally by the Chrysler and Schenck Estates, the former with its still-surviving Oval and Amphitrite Fountain, its vanished double row of greenhouses clipping the corner of today's Barney Square, its pier, swimming pool and bathhouses, and its large garage on Third Street; the Schenck with its own pier and pool, its less pretentious garage, and its "cottage theater" for private showings (this bit of the North Shore being something of a movie colony). Two smaller

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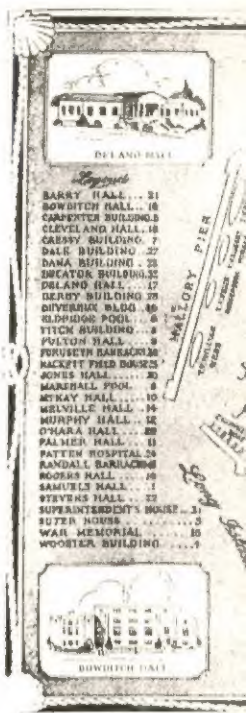
Plan of Chrysler and other newly-acquired estates, showing original street pattern and "first overlay" of Civilian Conservation Corps huts.

Both maps courtesy Harold V. Nemey

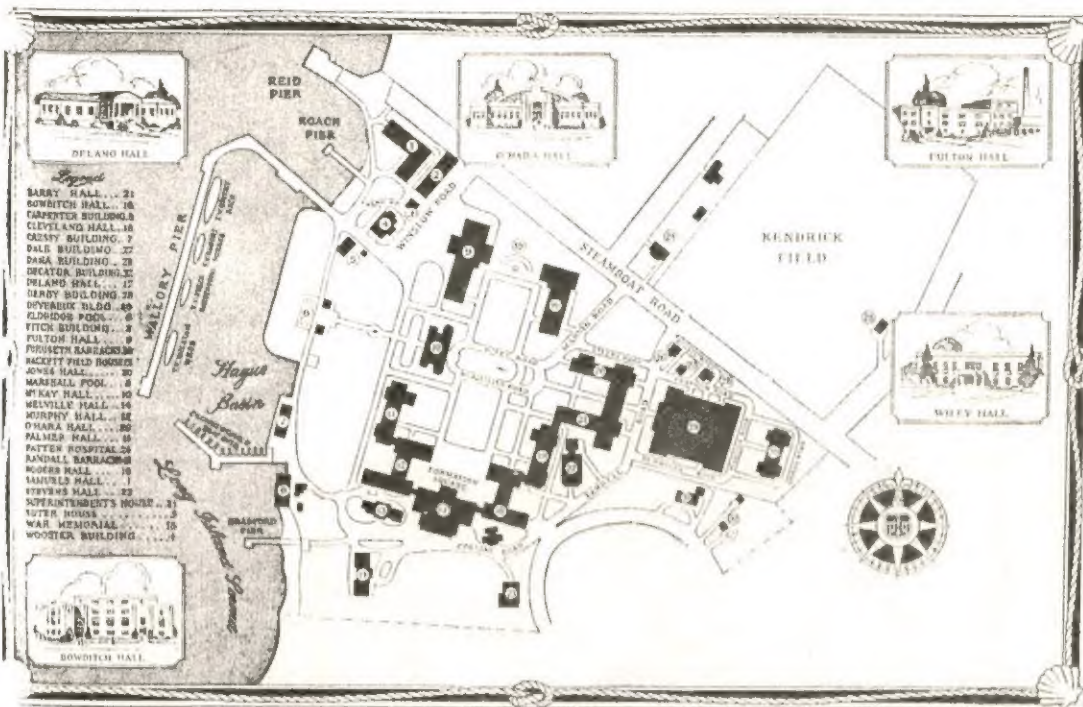
Plan of Academy campus with "first and second overlays" (CCC huts in dotted lines, new "semi-permanent" buildings in shading).



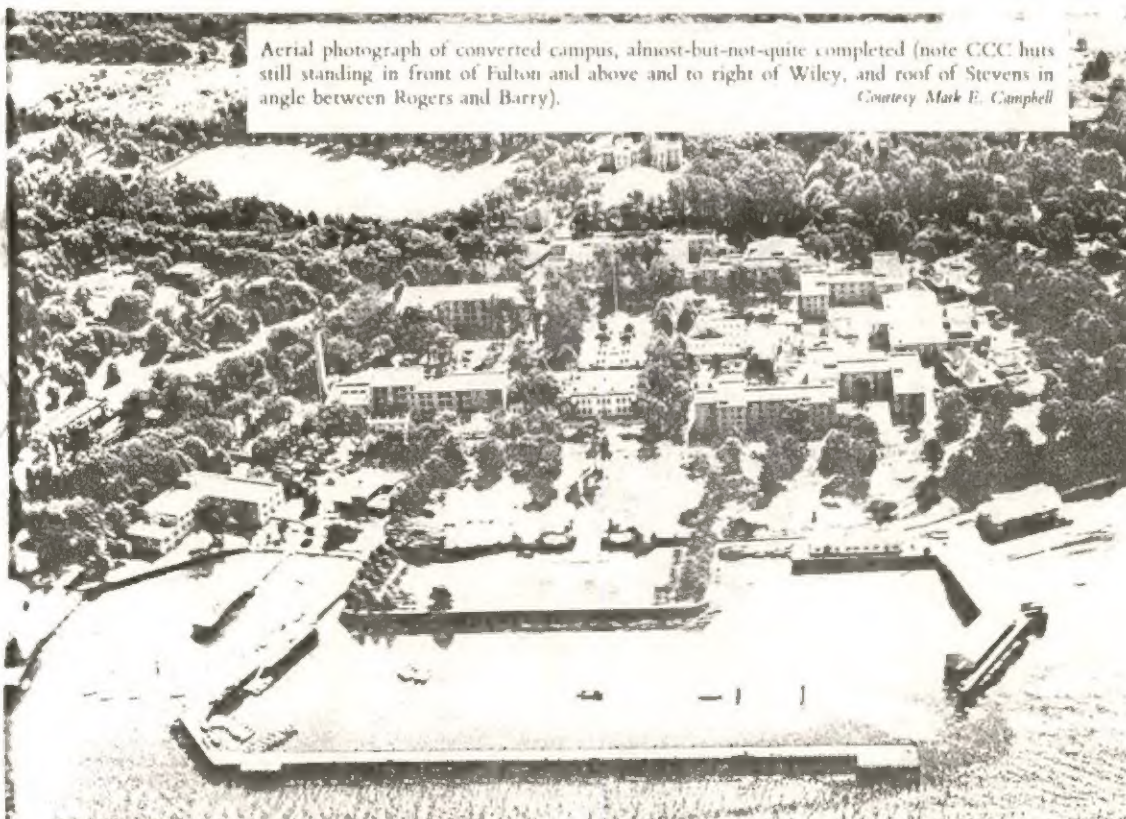
From: Mitchell, We'll Deliver, p. 46.



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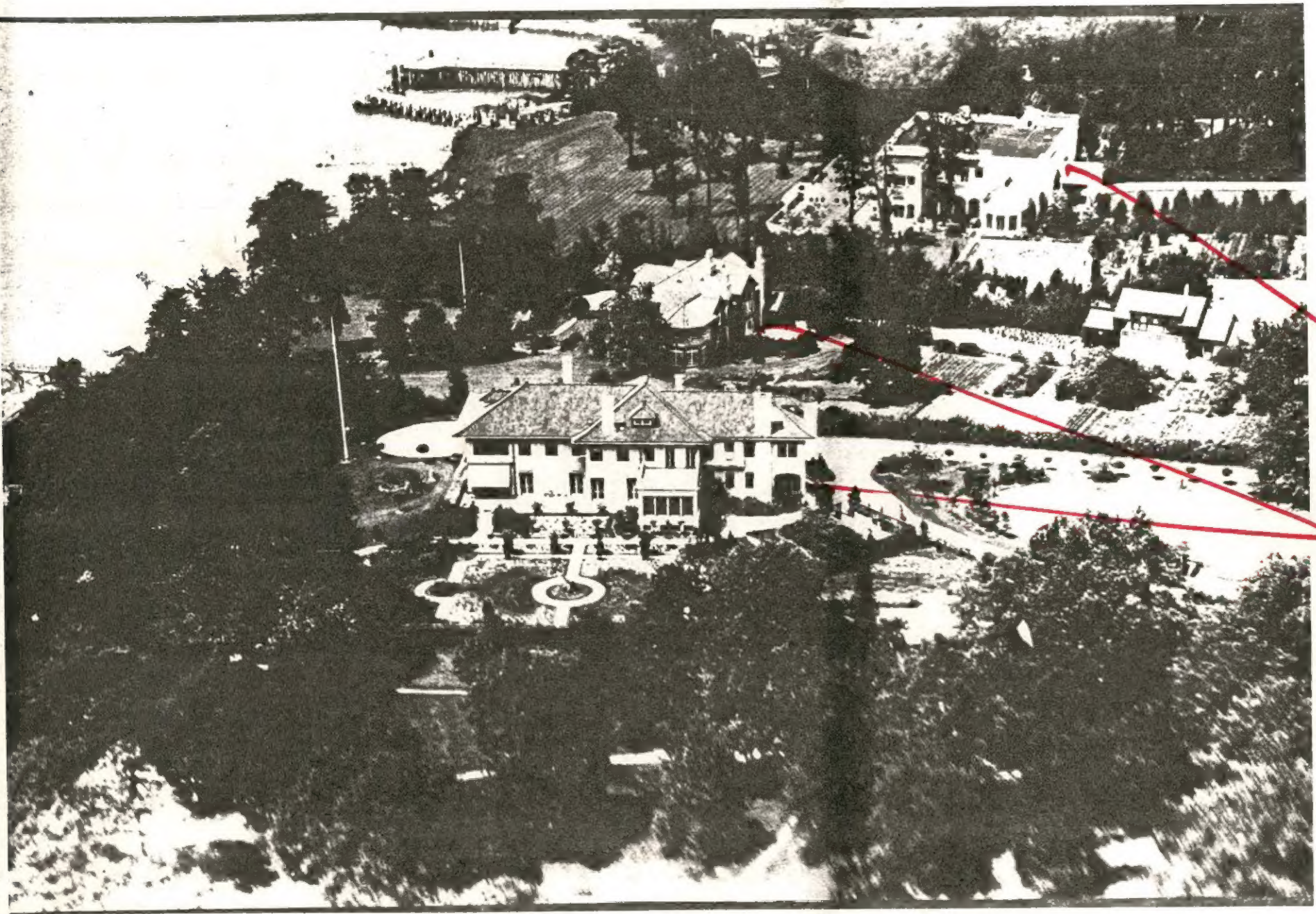


The finished campus, after removal of CCC huts but before demolition of Stevens Hall (# 22).



Aerial photograph of converted campus, almost-but-not-quite completed (note CCC huts still standing in front of Fulton and above and to right of Wiley, and roof of Stevens in angle between Rogers and Barry).
Courtesy Mark E. Campbell

C. 1930's photograph of Chrysler and Schenck estates.





Photograph of the Museum of the U.S. Merchant Marine, formerly the Barstow Mansion.

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Photograph of the former Schenck estate, now student union.

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Photograph of Thomas Meighan estate, now the Officer's Club. / Melville Hall 05939, ddd 145



Photograph of front (east) facade of Chrysler mansion, Wiley Hall.

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Academy Grounds:
Grenwolde Circle Homes



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Academy Grounds:
Grenwolde Circle Homes



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Academic buildings.



KP19

Academic buildings.



Bland
Library
05939. 000150



Guardhouse.

05939.000152



Two houses off Elm Ridge Road



NE corner
Steamboat & Elm Ridge
05939.000144



8 Elm Ridge 1918
05939.000006